

LEAGUE LINES



A Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Umpqua Valley

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SEPTEMBER 2014

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to League members, new and old! It has been a hot summer, but I trust everyone found it enjoyable.

Scott and I went to the Naturalization Ceremony for new citizens, which was held in July at Crater Lake. The park has been hosting this since a recent decision to hold these events at national parks around the country. The Friends of Crater Lake helps with the ceremony, as do the Department of Interior and the National Parks Service. One of our members was on the board for Friends of Crater Lake [Beverly Paulson], and so our League has been there to invite the new citizens to register to vote.

The drive to Crater Lake is about two hours from Roseburg, so we decided to camp the night beforehand in our small camp trailer at Diamond Lake. Our rig is a 12 foot A-frame, folding camp trailer. It is light weight and easy to set up.

The instructions for the event were to meet at the park at 9:30 am, although the actual ceremony was to begin at noon. The day began with rain and cool temperatures. When we arrived at the Diamond Lake campground we found most sites were reserved. We did get one just above the water in a sheltered spot, with rain and cold wind blowing all day. The lake even had white caps and fog.

Well, first of all our battery died, so we could not have lights inside. And next the heater would not work without electric power, so we huddled inside our camper watching other people arrive in the rain and set up their spaces.

We could cook with gas, and see with our headlamps, but without power, even the small refrigerator was not an option, and we had just filled it with milk. I wondered if it would not be better to put the food items outside, but we didn't because of bears. That night the temperature inside our camper was 37 degrees. We got so cold we went to bed early.

The next day brought sunshine. We hurried to Crater Lake, to the Watchman Overlook where the ceremony would take place. The drive from Diamond Lake campground took about 35 minutes. The drive is beautiful,

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along a very narrow road high above the surrounding mountains. Yes, it was still cool, with wind. I brought my hat.

We arrived at the spot and found many camera crews setting up video equipment. There were at least nine people taping, including a big camera boom which went up about 40 feet. It was 10:00 and the organizer was nowhere to be found. We milled around, directed traffic and chatted for the next two hours.

I spoke to one person from Washington DC who said they were traveling around the US doing these videos for the US Citizen and Immigration Services, and that this ceremony would be edited and put on their website. He said he drove in the day before in fog so heavy he could hardly see the road.



Now, however, the day could not have been more lovely – not a cloud in sight.

Finally the ceremony happened with 17 new citizens from all around Oregon and Washington State. Including the families, there was a crowd.

My chair and table were taken for use by the choir who sang, so after the ceremony, Scott and I handed out voter registration forms to all the new citizens. They were of all ages and came from many countries: Mexico, Philippines, Africa, Europe, Denmark. It was impressive.

Although we had challenges camping, this is an event our League will want to continue to participate in every year. Consider volunteering to be part of this national ceremony next time and help new citizens register to vote.

Sally McKain, President, League of Women Voters of Umpqua Valley

MEMBER PROFILE

Nancy Farris is an Oregonian, born in Portland and raised in Corvallis. She is the second of five children. Both of her parents were school teachers, though her mother stayed home when the children once they started their family.

Nancy's mother and grandmother were both home economics teachers, and Nancy's daughter

has continued that tradition with a degree in apparel design. Nancy's own degree is from the

school of health, physical education and recreation, with an emphasis in community youth agency administration. Escaping a family tradition of education at OSU in Corvallis, Nancy

attended the University of Oregon in Eugene, becoming the “webfoot” of the family.

At the U of O, Nancy ran hurdles as part of the college track team and coached track for her practicum experience. She has been a track coach ever since, coaching when her son and daughter were in high school, and again when her granddaughter reached junior high.



Nancy married when she graduated from college, and as a young wife she started her first business, a pre-school that emphasized the development of readiness skills, actively preparing children for school. Nancy has always had a major interest in early childhood development and in children’s literature, so this was a perfect fit for her. The children even had homework. Nancy remembers that one parent became angry when his child was sent home with a cutting project designed to develop motor skills. Apparently the child enjoyed the drill and practiced extensively on some fabrics intended for other purposes.

When Nancy had children, she gave up her business and became a full-time mom. When her first child was one year old, she and her husband moved to Roseburg.

She decided to home school her children, and as one of a handful of young home schooling mothers, she helped create an organization called Homeschoolers Connection. They organized “Fabulous Fridays” where the parents taught art and science classes tailored to the ages of their children.

Nancy’s children entered the public school system when they were in fifth or sixth grade, depending on when she felt they were ready.

In 2001, Nancy married Jeff Farris, a retired officer in the fire department. As her children grew up (Nancy has three grandchildren and a fourth on the way), she began to look for something to occupy her, a way to make a difference. For five years she had an event planning business, but it never really took off.

She and her husband were both retired. Nancy was feeling the effects of “empty nest syndrome” and wanted to do something that would contribute to society.

She was rapidly becoming dismayed by the political polarization that was occurring in the country. People seemed angry when others didn’t agree with their points of view. Nancy felt a strong desire to bring calm and reason to political discourse, to encourage others to view diversity of opinion as a positive force.

She shared with me some words she wrote to a relative: “...it’s my passion in life to do this – to applaud the need for differing opinions in our country, and to encourage those differences to be our strength, as they have for generations, rather than for those differences to polarize our

citizenry, thereby stifling our ability to function. (But worse than stifling ourselves politically, the polarization has created all new levels of hate and disdain, which is so un-Christ like)...."

Nancy feels that the art of compromise, of working together, worked quite well for our country during the decades when she was growing up, and blames much of the current polarization on emotions stirred up by talk radio and social media. Her wish is to try to bridge the gap, and to encourage people to think before passing along sound bites – to do a little research first.

It was this passion that brought Nancy to the League of Women Voters. Typical of her, she approached us cautiously, dipping her toe in a little at a time, checking the League out carefully. She was a “friend” of the League for two years before finally joining.

As a friend, she first became active on our Garden Tour committee. As a member, she has become the committee chair, drawing on all her event planner organizational skills and creativity.

Nancy thinks the most important thing the League does is create the opportunity for our community to meet candidates and ask them questions directly, so that we don’t have to vote based on political sound bites.

She also loves the chance to meet and work with people who share her interest in civil political discourse.

Anna Willman, Newsletter Editor

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We acquired one new member this summer, Lisa Sabol. We are so glad she has joined us and look forward to working with her. Please make a

point of introducing yourselves to her at our monthly meetings and making her feel welcome.

GARDEN TOUR COMMITTEE REPORT

I am pleased to report that our annual garden tour in June was a successful event with 215 “tourists”! One couple going through Oregon from Chico, California, saw our ad in the *News Review*, and decided to join in the fun!

The tour included six gardens on the west side of Roseburg spanning fifteen miles, from West Harvard all the way to Umpqua. Each garden was unique: one, a smaller garden, specialized in garden art; one garden was creatively arranged on a very steep hill; and one was the elegant garden of the Reustle Winery; with three other lovely gardens intermingled along the route.

Many and gardeners as well, commented positively about the various aspects of the garden tour. My favorite comment came from a couple at the Reustle Winery who said, “Everyone at all the gardens were very friendly and helpful. Not like Republicans and Democrats.” So we can take pride in putting on a “nonpartisan” event.



This major fund raiser for the League netted \$2,000. Local contributors were Photo Frogg and In Print.

I would like to thank all of the men and women who volunteered in this endeavor, and invite any

of you who would like to help in future tours to feel free to let me know.

This year's volunteers were: Carol Bailey, Darlene Brooks, Mary Brown, Jenny Carloni, JoAnne DeSpain, Nancy and Jeff Farris, Georgia French, Jean Galleher, Minnie Grossen, Jan Harkness, Robin Hartmann, Charlotte Herbert, Alice Lackey, Penny Lapham, Sally and Scott McKain, Libby Mizell, Jean Oswald, Beverly Paulson, Penny Reed, Sue Waite, Ellen Williams (and her cousin, Gina), Anna Willman, Julie Wright.

Nancy Farris, Garden Tour Committee

OUR LEAGUE HAS A NEW HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

Bob Bickers, Jean Galleher, and Joe Yetter requested that a Health Care Committee be formed to “investigate and educate the public about changes to health care”. The LWVUV Board unanimously approved the formation of this committee at the August 5, 2014 Board meeting.

The goal of the Health Care Committee will be to “study the current health care delivery system in Douglas County”. The study will be comprehensive and include all aspects of health care. The Committee will refer to the National League Health Care position (Advancing Health Care) and to the State LWVOR Advocacy position on Physical Health Care.

The Committee has met twice in August with approximately eight League members in attendance at each meeting.

The Committee hopes to sponsor two public education forums on health care (Fall and Winter). Additional League Members are invited to attend. For more information about meetings and forum dates, contact either:

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 23: 5:30 – Ice Cream Social at the Presbyterian Church.

October 7: 6:00 – Candidates’ Forum for House District #2 at the Courthouse Annex.

October 14: 6:00 – Candidate’s Forum for County Commissioner at the Courthouse Annex.

October 21: 5:30 – Monthly meeting is a Ballot Measure Presentation at Ford Room, Douglas County Library

November 18: 5:30 – Monthly meeting on Health Care. Location TBA.

December 16: 5:30 – Monthly meeting

Jean Galleher (dcjean45@gmail.com, or 541-459-2189) or

Bob Bickers (friscobob38@gmail.com, or 541-315-0857).

Jean Galleher

NEW PROGRAM SCHEDULE

After several years of experimenting with noon meeting times alternating with evening hours, the board has decided to revert to regular evening program meetings on the third Tuesday of each month, with socializing at 5:30 and commencement of the meeting at 6:00 PM. We will provide food so as to make it easy for people to come directly from work.

We are still investigating venues for the meetings in hopes of finding a consistent meeting space.

That said, this month we will meet on the fourth Tuesday, September 23rd for our ice cream social.

SEPTEMBER ICE CREAM SOCIAL

This event was such a success last year that we are doing it again. We will meet at 5:30 on September 23rd at the Presbyterian Church for lots of ice cream and conversation.

Please bring friends who may be interested in joining the League.

We will talk about what we want to do this year, and you will have a chance to sign up for active involvement in tasks important to the League such as: distributing Voter's Guides, registering high school voters, planning a Food Day-related event for Oct. 21, assisting with candidate forums and ballot measure presentations, joining the new Health Care committee, or acting as a liaison to another community group such as Neighborworks Umpqua, AAUW, or the Global Warming Coalition.

ELECTION YEAR ACTIVITIES

We will be having two candidate forums and a ballot measure presentation this year. On October 7th from 6:00 to 7:30, we will host a forum for candidates for House District #2, and at the same time on October 14th, a forum for candidates for Douglas County Commissioner. Both forums will take place at the Douglas County Courthouse Annex.

The ballot measure presentation will take place at our monthly meeting on October 21 from 5:30 to 7:00 at the Douglas County Library Ford Room.

We will also be distributing copies of the League's *Voters' Guide* throughout the county and encouraging voters to use Vote 411. If you would like to help with this call Sally McKain at 541-679-5597 or email her at: sallymckain@charter.net.

Our league is also checking to see if we can help make voter registration available in all county high schools for students who'll be 18 by Nov.4. Joe Yetter has offered to start the work on this. If you'd like to help him, please contact him at: joeleeyetter@yahoo.com, or 360-801-0723.

UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

November 18 will be a Fall Health Forum organized by Jean Galleher, Bob Bickers, Joe Yetter, and any other interested helpers. The purpose of this forum will be to inform the public about the way health care is working in Oregon and in Douglas County. We hope to hear clear explanations from knowledgeable experts.

We are exploring the possibility of having Global warming as the focus for our December 16 meeting, perhaps drawing on the television documentary series *Years of Living Dangerously*, or perhaps taking a look at any follow up to the local Global Warming Coalition's Forum held on May 13, 2014.

BOOK REPORT

No book report this time, but I do have a suggested book title which fits in with Nancy Farris' theme of calm communication among people with diverse opinions: *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, by Jonathan Haidt. If anyone would like to read and report on this book for the next issue, I'd be pleased.

Anna Willman

ACTION UPDATE

The LWVOR supports three of the ballot measures on the ballot in the upcoming election:

#86 - Student Opportunity Fund. Amends the Constitution: Requires creation of a fund for Oregonians pursuing postsecondary education, authorizes state indebtedness to finance fund.

#88 - Driver's Card. Provides Oregon resident a "driver card" without requiring proof of legal presence in the United States.

and #89 – the State Equal Rights amendment. Amends Constitution: State/political subdivision shall not deny or abridge equality of rights on account of sex.

Please note: the League has not taken a position on measure #92, which requires labeling of products containing GMO ingredients. Even though the LWVUS has taken a position in favor of "accurate" labeling, the nation-wide agricultural study consensus resulted in no consensus on labeling foods produced with "new technologies".

At the national level, the LWVUS adopted a strong position on Human Trafficking by concurrence at the 2014 national convention: "The League of Women Voters opposes all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking. We consider human trafficking to be a form of modern day slavery and believe that every effort should be made through legislation and changes in public policy to prevent human trafficking. Prosecution and penalization of traffickers and abusers should be established, and existing laws should be strictly enforced.

Extensive essential services for victims should be applied where needed. Education and awareness programs on human trafficking should be established in our communities and in our schools."

Alice Lackey

HELP WANTED

If you are interested in volunteering for any of the following opportunities, please call Sally McKain (541-679-5597).

- We need volunteers to help at our candidates' forums and our ballot measure presentation in October.
- We welcome volunteers for committees, including our garden tour fundraiser committee, and our new health care committee.
- Volunteers to write book reviews for this newsletter.
- Board members. This is a fun job with interesting people and a chance to make a real difference in the community. Meet once a month and help lead this organization.
- Callers are always needed, to remind members of meetings and other important events.
- Drivers to help non-driving members get to meetings (or to car pool with other drivers for state events held in other communities).

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